كتاب فحولة الشعراء

للأصمعي

تحقيق المستشرق

ش. توري

قدم لها

الدكتور صلاح الدين المنجد

دار الكتاب الجديد
بيروت • لبنان

الطبعة الثانية

دار الكتاب الجديد - بيروت

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

مقدّمة

— ١ —

ما زال العلماء منذ ظهور الإسلام حتى يومنا يهتمّون بالشعر القديم وينقدونه، ويحفظونه، ويشرحونه، ويقلّدونه، والرسالةُ التي أقدّم لها تمثّل لوناً من هذا الاهتمام. فقد تضمّنت آراء الأصمعيّ، العالم والناقد واللغويّ والراوية، في فحولة طائفة من الشعراء الجاهليين والإسلاميين، رواها عنه تلميذه أبو حاتم سهل ابن محمد بن عثمان السجزي، ورواها عن أبي حاتم تلميذه ابن دريد اللغوي.

لا نجد في الرسالة تفسيراً واضحاً لمعنى « فحولة » الشاعر. فقد سأل أبو حاتم أستاذه الأصمعي عن معنى « الفحل »، فقال: من كان له مزية على غيره، كمزية الفحل على الحِقاق. (ج. حِقّ، من الإبل، الداخلة في السنة الرابعة). على أننا نجد في اللسان ما يلي: « فحولةُ الشعراء هم الذين غلبوا بالهجاء مَنْ هاجاهم، مثل جرير والفرزدق وأشباههما، وكذلك كل من عارض شاعراً فغلب عليه ».

لكن هذا التعريف يبدو ناقصاً، لأننا نجد الأصمعي في رسالته يصف بعض الشعراء بالفحولة لغير ما ذكره « اللسان ». فقد قال إن طُفَيْلاً فحلٌ لأنه غايةٌ في النعت وإن كعب بن سعد الغنوي ليس من الفحول إلّا في المرثية، فإنه ليس في الدنيا مثلها، وإن لبيداً ليس بفحل، وإن شعره كأنه طيلسان طبري، يعني أنه جيد الصنعة وليست له حلاوة، وإن الحويدرة لو قال خمس قصائد مثل قصيدته كان فحلاً ...، ومن هذا نرى أن الأصمعيّ كان ينظر في الفحولة إلى جودة السبك، وبراعة المعنى، ووَفْرَة الشعر معاً.

وتبدو قيمة الرسالة في أنها جمعت عدداً كبيراً من الشعراء الجاهليين والإسلاميين، وأن الأصمعي نفسه كان له شأن كبير، نظراً لمكانته في تاريخنا اللغوي والأدبي.

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وُلد الأصمعيّ — وهو عبد الملك بن قُرَيْب بن عبد الملك . . . بن أصمع ، وإليه نسبته — في البصرة سنة ثلاث وعشرين ومائة من الهجرة . وكانت البصرة يومئذ مَجْمَع العلماء والشعراء والأدباء . فلما شبّ أخذ القراءات واللغة والأدب على أبي عمرو بن العلاء ، أحد القراء السبعة . وأخذ عن طائفة العلماء منهم الخليل ابن أحمد الفراهيدي ، والإمام جعفر الصادق ، وحماد عجرد ، وحماد بن سلمة ، وحماد بن زيد وهما محدثان ، وخلف الأحمر ، وسفيان بن عُيَيْنة ، وآخرون . ولقي عدداً كبيراً من الشعراء الفصحاء ، وأولادهم ، وسمع منهم أشعارهم . ثم إنه عُني بأمر لم يُعْنَ به أحدٌ مثله هو السماع من الأعراب ، وأهل البادية ، فكان يحفظ ما يسمعه منهم . فاجتمع له من رواية الشعر ما لم يجتمع لغيره ، وكان يفخر بهذه الميزة التي أوتيها . وكان يملك إلى ذلك كله ، عدداً ضخماً من الكتب ، يُطالع فيها . خرج مرة مع الرشيد إلى الرقة فحمل معه ثمانية عشر صندوقاً من الكتب ، وذكر أنه خفّف الحمل ، ولو ثقّله لحمل أضفاف ذلك . وهذا يدلّ على ما كان عنده من الكتب .

اشتهر الأصمعيّ بروايته الواسعة ، ومعرفته بالشعر ونقدم ، وبالتفسير والحديث والنحو ، وكذلك اشتهر بحفظه وقوة ذاكرته ، وعُرف عنه الذكاءُ واستحضار الحجّة ، وخفة الروح ، وظَرفُ النادرة ، وحلاوةُ المُزاح ، ولذْع التهكّم . وقد امتلأت كتب أدبنا العربي بالرواية عنه ، أو ذكر أخباره ، حتى ما تكاد تلقى كتاباً من المصادر الكبيرة ، لا ذكرَ له فيها . لقد كان من العلماء النوادر الذين أغنوا الأدب العربي ، وساعدوا على توضيح معالمه .

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ألّف الاصمعي كتباً كثيرة ، أورد صاحب الفهرست مسرداً بها[١] ، وفاتَه بعضُها ، وهذا بيان ما جمعناه من أسماء مؤلفاته :

(١) الفهرست (ط. أوروبة) ص ٥٥ - ٥٦ .

١ – **خلق الانسان**
٢ – الاجناس
٣ – **الأنواء**
٤ – الهمز
٥ – المقصود والممدود
٦ – **الفرق**
٧ – الصفات
٨ – الاثواب
٩ – الميسر والقداح
١٠ – خلق الفرس
١١ – **الخيل**
١٢ – **الابل**
١٣ – **الشاء**
١٤ – الاخبية والبيوت
١٥ – **الوحوش وصفاتها**
١٦ – الأوقات
١٧ – فعل وأفعل
١٨ – الامثال
١٩ – **الأضداد**
٢٠ – الالفاظ
٢١ – السلاح
٢٢ – اللغات
٢٣ – **الاشتقاق**
٢٤ – النوادر
٢٥ – أصول الكلام
٢٦ – القلب والابدال
٢٧ – جزيرة العرب
٢٨ – الدلو
٢٩ – الرحل
٣٠ – معاني الشعر
٣١ – مصادر
٣٢ – القصائد الست
٣٣ – الاراجيز
٣٤ – النخلة
٣٥ – **النبات والشجر**
٣٦ – الخراج
٣٧ – ما اتفق لفظه واختلف معناه
٣٨ – غريب الحديث
٣٩ – السرج واللجام والشوى والنعال
٤٠ – غريب الحديث والكلام الوحشي
٤١ – نوادر الاعراب
٤٢ – مياه العرب
٤٣ النسب
٤٤ – الاصوات
٤٥ – المذكر والمؤنث
٤٦ – **الاصمعيات**
٤٧ – **الدارات**
٤٨ – **النخل والكرم**
٤٩ – أسماء الخمر
٥٠ – ما تكلم به العرب فكثر في أفواه الناس
٥١ – **فحولة الشعراء**

هذا ما جمعناه من مؤلفاته. وما أثبت منها بحرف أسود هو المطبوع منها[1].

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والعجيب أن رسالة «فحولة الشعراء» لم يذكرها صاحب الفهرست، ولا الذين كتبوا عن الاصمعي في عصرنا، كعز الدين التنوخي، والزركلي، وكحالة، وسركيس، مع أنها طُبعت منذ أمد طويل. وهي ذات شأن كبير، وتستحق الدراسة العميقة.

وقد كان المستشرق تشارلس تورّي قد نشر هذه الرسالة في عام ١٩١١ في المجلد ٦٥ من مجلة جمعية المستشرقين الالمان. مع ترجمة انكليزية، ويبدو أن أبناء العربية لم يطّلعوا عليها، ولم يفيدوا منها في دراساتهم عن الشعر القديم.

والمستشرق تورّي كان أستاذاً في جامعة ييل Yale بالولايات المتحدة، وقد نشر عدداً من النصوص العربية، منها «فتوح مصر وإفريقية والمغرب» لابن عبد الحكم، و «اغلاط الضعفاء» لابن برّي، وفحولة الشعراء للاصمعي، وغير ذلك، وتوفى سنة ١٩٤٨ هـ، وكان مولده سنة ١٨٦٣ م.

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روى هذه الرسالة كتابةً عن الأصمعي تلميذه أبو حاتم السجستاني، وهو سهل ابن محمد. كان من كبار علماء البصرة باللغة والشعر. وقد نحا نحو أستاذه الأصمعي في مؤلفاته الكثيرة، وكان ثقة. توفى سنة ٢٤٨ هـ. وكان من تلاميذه ابن دريد اللغوي المتوفى سنة ٣٢١هـ، وهو الذي روى عنه رسالتنا هذه. فتكون الرسالة قد وصلت إلينا بطريق عالمين كبيرين ثقتين عن الأصمعي.

بيروت، ١٩٧١ — صلاح الدين المنجد

(١) للتوسع في ترجمة الأصمعي أنظر: عز الدين التنوخي، الأصمعي، في مجلة المجمع العلمي العربي بدمشق، المجلد ١٤ (١٩٣٦) ص ٨٣ - ١١٠؛ وكحاله، معجم المؤلفين ٦ / ١٨٧؛ والزركلي، الأعلام ٤/ ٣٠٧؛ ونزهة الالباء ص ١١٢ (طبعة محمد أبو الفضل ابراهيم، وما ذكره من المصادر)؛ وبروكلمن، المجلد الأول ٧٦٣، والذيل الأول ١٠٤.

كتاب فُحولة الشُعراء
رواية ابن دُريد عن ابى حاتم عن الأَصمعى

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم قال ابو بكر محمّد بن الحسن بن دريد الأَزدىّ قال ابو حاتم سهل بن محمّد بن عثمن السِجْزىّ سمعتُ الأَصمعىّ عبدَ الملك بن قُرَيْب غيرَ(1 مرة يفضّل النابغة الذُبْيانىّ على سائر شعراء(2 الجاهليّة وسألتُه آخرَ ما سألته قُبَيْلَ موته مَن أوّل الفحول قال النابغة الذبيانىّ ثم قال ما أُرى فى الدنيا لأَحد مثلَ قول امرئ القيس

وَقاهُمْ جَدُّهُمْ بِبَنِى أَبِيهِمْ   وبالأَشْقَيْنَ ما كانَ العِقابُ(3

قال ابو حاتم فلمّا رآنى أَكتب كلامه فكّر ثم قال بل اوّلهم كلّهم فى الجُودة امرؤُ القيس له الحُظْوة والسبق وكلّهم أَخذوا من قوله واتّبعوا مَذْهبه وكأنّه جعل النابغةَ الذبيانىّ من الفحول قال ابو حاتم قلت ما معنى الفَحْل قال يريد أن له مَزِيّةً على غيره كمزيّة الفحل على الحِقاق قال وبيتُ جرير يدلّك على هذا

وابنُ اللَبُونِ إِذا ما لُزَّ(4 فى قَرَنٍ   لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ صَولةَ البُزْلِ القَناعيسِ

قال ابو حاتم وسأله رجل اىّ الناس طُرًّا أَشعرُ قال النابغة قال تقدّم عليه أحدا قال لا ولا أدركتُ العلماءَ بالشعر يفضّلون عليه أحدا قلت فزُهير بن ابى سُلْمَى قد اختُلف فيه وفيهما(5 ثم قال لا قال ابو عمرو وسأله رجل وانا اسمع النابغة اشعر أم زهير فقال ما يصلح زهير أن يكون أجيرًا للنابغة قال [و]أوس(6 بن حجر أَشعر

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1) Ms. عن.   2) Ms. الشعراء.

3) Ahlwardt, *Divans* I, 120; Agh. VIII, 69; Cheikho, *Šuʿarāʾ an-Naṣrānīya* I, 17, etc.

4) Ms. دُنّ. The verse cited in *Lisān* s. v. لزّ and قنعس.

5) The text of this passage is queried by the copyist, and كذا is inserted here in Landberg's hand.   6) So corrected in Ms.

من زهير ولكن النابغة طأطأ منه قال أوس

جَيْشٌ تَرَى منه الفضاء معضّلا[1]

فى قافية وقال النابغة فجاء بمعناه فى نصف بيت وزاد شيئًا آخر فقال (fol. 2)

جَيْشٌ[2] يَضَلُّ به الفضاء معضّلا   يَدَعُ الإِكامَ كأنّهنّ صحارى

قال ابو حاتم حدثنا الاصمعيّ قال حدثنا شيخ من اهل نجد قال كان طُفَيل الغَنَويّ يسمّى فى الجاهلية مُحبِّرا لحسن شعره قال وطفيل عندى فى بعض شعره اشعر من امرئ القيس الاصمعى يقوله ثم قال وقد اخذ طفيل من امرئ القيس شيئا قال ويقال ان كثيرا من شعر امرئ القيس لصعاليك كانوا معه قال وكان عمرو بن قَمِيئَةَ[3] دخل معه الروم الى قيصر قال وكان معوية بن ابى سفيان يقول دعوا لى طفيلا فان شعره اشبه بشعر الاوّلين من زهير وهو فحل ثم قال من العجب ان النابغة لم ينعت فرسا قطّ بشىء الّا قوله

صُفْرًا مَناخِرُها من الجَرْجارِ[4]

قال ولم يكن النابغة وأوس وزهير يحسنون صفة الخيل ولكن طفيل غاية فى النعت وهو فحل ثم انشد له

يُرادُ[5] على فأسِ اللِجام كأنّما   يُرادُ[5] به مِرْقاةُ جِذْعٍ مُشذَّبِ

1) Cf. the verse quoted from this poet in *Lisān* XIII, 478.

2) Ahlw., *Divans*, p. 14 has جَمْعًا Diw. Cairo 1293 (with Comm. of Baṭalyūsī), p. 37 has جَمْعٌ. On this verse see also Ibn as-Sikkīt, p. 343.

3) Ms. قَمَئَة.

4) Ahlw. p. 14; Diw. Cairo 1293, p. 38, and elsewhere.

5) Elsewhere always يُرادَى or تُرادَى; see Krenkow, "Ṭufail al-Ganawī", JRAS. 1907, p. 852 (vs. 45), and the references given by him, pp. 825, 827.

قوله يراد على فاس اللجام تقول راودته على كذا اى حاولته عليه ويقال اردته ايضا وانما يصف عنقه[1] . . . .

. . . . وهو جيّد الصفة للخيل جدّا ثم انشد

يشدّ الشُّوونِ أو أَراد لِيَزْفِرا[2]

وقد احسن فى قصيدته التى يقول فيها

تِلْكَ المَكارمُ لا قَعْبانِ[3] من لَبَنٍ   شِيبا بماءٍ فعادا بَعْدُ أَبْوالا[4]

قلت ما مذهبه فى ذا فان هذا البيت يدخل فى شعر غيره[5] قال لما قال سوار ابن الحياء القشيرى ومنا ناشدُ رجله ومنا الذى اسر حاجبا ومنا الذى سقى اللبن قال النابغة حينئذ (fol. 3)

تلك المكارم لا قعبان من لبن

قال الاصمعى لو كانت هذه القصيدة للنابغة الاكبر بلغتْ كل مبلغ قلت فالاعشى اعشى بنى قيس بن ثعلبة قال ليس بفحل قلت فعلقمة بن عَبَدة قال فحل قلت فالحرث بن حِلِّزة قال فحل قلت فعمرو بن كُلْثوم قال ليس بفحل قلت فالمسيَّب بن عَلَس قال فحل قلت فعدىّ بن زيد افحل هو قال ليس بفحل ولا انثى قال ابو حاتم وانما سألته لانى سمعت ابن مناذر لا يقدّم عليه احدا قلت فحسّان بن ثابت قال فحل قلت فقيس بن الخَطيم قال

1) In the Ms. there is no sign of a gap here, nor does any one appear to have noticed it. It is plain that from speaking of Ṭufail's description of horses al-Aṣma'ī then passed on to speak of his acknowledged rival in this regard, Nābigha Ja'dī. The place where the omission occurred must be the one which I have indicated, and it may be that the text has suffered the loss of only a line or two.

2) The verse appears to come from the long *qaṣīda* of this poet of which small portions are given in Agh. IV, 130 f., Hiz. I, 513 f., and elsewhere, while 70 or 80 verses from it appear in the Jamhara, 145 ff. A similar verse (but not the same) is Jamh. 147, 4.

3) Ms. قُعْبانِ.

4) See especially Brockelmann in *Nöldeke-Festschrift* I, 118.

5) Landberg's copyist queries the line beginning with this word and ending with ومنا.

فحل قلت فالمُرَقّشان قال فحلان قلت فابن قميئة[1] قال فحل قال هو قميئة[1] بن سعد بن مالك وكنيته ابو يزيد قلت فأبو زُبَيد[2] قال ليس بفحل قلت فالشمّاخ قال فحل قال الاصمعى واخبرنى من راى قبر الشمّاخ بأرمينية قلت فمُزَرِّد اخوه قال ليس بدون الشمّاخ ولكنه افسد شعره بما يهجو الناس . . . .[3] قال واخبرنى الاصمعى قبل هذا ان اهل الكوفة لا يقدّمون على الاعشى احدا قال وكان خَلَفٌ لا يقدّم عليه احدا قال ابو حاتم لانه قد قال فى كل عَروض ورَكِبَ كل قافية[3] قلت فعُرْوة بن الورد قال شاعر كريم وليس بفحل قلت فالحُوَيْدرة[4] قال لو قال مثل قصيدته خمس قصائد كان فحلا قلت فمُهَلْهِل قال ليس بفحل ولو كان قال مثل قوله

أَلَيْلَتَنا بذى جُشَم[5] أَنِيرى

كان أَفْحَلَهم قال واكثر شعره محمول عليه قلت فابو دُؤاد[6] قال صالح لم يقل انه فحل قلت فالراعى قال ليس بفحل قلت فابن مُقْبِل قال ليس بفحل قال ابو حاتم وسألت الاصمعى من اشعر الراعى ام ابن مقبل قال ما اقربهما قلت لا يقنعنا هذا قال الراعى اشبه شعرا بالقديم وبالاوّل قلت فابن احمر (fol. 4) الباهلى قال ليس بفحل ولكن دون هؤلاء وفوق طبقته قال وارى ان مالك بن حَريم الهَمْدانى من الفحول قال ولو قال ثعلبة بن صُعَيْر المازنى مثل قصيدته خمسا كان فحلا قلت فكعب بن جُعَيل قال اظنّه من الفحول ولا أَستَيْقنه قلت فجرير والفرزدق والاخطل قال هؤلاء لو كانوا فى الجاهلية كان لهم شأن ولا اقول فيهم شيئا لانهم اسلاميّون

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1) Ms. قمئة. 2) Ms. زَبيد.

3) Apparently a leaf of one of the parent Mss. was misplaced, for this passage plainly belongs above, after the statement that al-Aʿšā was not a *faḥl*.

4) Ms. فالجويدرة.

5) Better حُسَم or حُسَم; Nöldeke, *Del. Carm.* p. 44, *Lisān* s. v. حسم, etc. 6) Ms. داود.

قال ابو حاتم وكنت اسمعه يفضّل جريرا على الفرزدق كثيرا فقلت له يوم(1 دخل عليه عصام بن الفيض انى اريد ان اسألك عن شيء ولو ان عصاما يعلمه من قِبلك لم اسألك ثم قلت سمعتك تفضّل جريرا على الفرزدق غير مرّة فما تقول فيهما وفى الاخطل فاطرق ساعة ثم انشد بيتا من قصيدته(2

لَعَمْرِى لقد أَسْرَيْتُ لا ليلَ عاجزٍ   بساهمةِ(3 الخَدَّيْنِ طاويةِ القُرْبِ

فانشد ابياتا زُهاء العشرة ثم قال من قال لك أن(4 فى الدنيا احدا قال مثلها قبله ولا بعده فلا تصدّقه ثم قال ابو عمرو بن العلاء كان يفضّله سمعت ابا عمرو بن العلاء يقول لو ادرك الاخطل من الجاهلية يوما واحدا ما قدّمت عليه جاهليا ولا اسلاميا ثم قال الاصمعى(5 انشدت ابا عمرو بن العلاء شعرا فقال ما يطيق هذا من الاسلاميّين احد ولا الأَخْطَلُ قال ابو حاتم وسألته عن الاغلب افحل هو من الرجّاز فقال ليس بفحل ولا مفلح وقد(6 اعيانى شعره وقال لى مرّة ما اروى للأغلب(7 الا اثنتين ونصفا قلت كيف قلت نصفا قال اعرف له ثنتين وكنت اروى نصفا من التى على القاف فطوّلوها ثم قال كان ولده يزيدون فى شعره حتى افسدوه قال ابو حاتم وطلب منه اسحق بن العبّاس رجزا للاغلب(8 وطلب منى [. . . . .](9 فاعرته(10 فاخرج منها نحوا من عشرين (fol. 5) فقلت الم تزعم انك لا تعرف له الا اثنتين ونصفا قال لى بلى ولكننى انتقيت(11 ما اعرف فان لم يكن له فهو لغيره ممن هو

1) The line of Landberg's Ms. beginning with this word is queried.
2) Dīwān, ed. Salhani, p. 17, etc.
3) Ms. بساهمة. 4) Ms. إن. 5) Ms. للاصمعى.
6) Ms. وقال. 7) Ms. لا اغلب.
8) Ms. لاغلب. 9) Thus Landberg Ms.
10) Ms. فاعربه, corrected by Landberg's copyist.
11) Ms. اسمعت.

ثبت او ثقة قال ابو حاتم وكان أَرْوَى الناس للرجز الاصمعى قال ابو حاتم سمعت مرة نَجْرانيًّا كان قد ضاف بنواحى خُراسان فسأله فقال اخبرنى فلان بالرّىّ انك تروى اثنى عشر[1] الف ارجوزة قال نعم اربعة عشر[2] الف ارجوزة احفظها فتعجّبت فقال لى اكثرها قصار قلت اجعلها بيتا بيتا اربعة عشر الف بيت قال الاصمعى انما اعيانى شعر الاغلب قال خلف[3] فكان من ولده انسان يصدُق فى الحديث والروايات ويكذب عليه فى شعره قلت فحاتم الطائى قال حاتم انما يُعَدّ بكرم ولم يقل انه فحل قلت فمُعقِّر البارقى حليف بنى نُمَيْر قال لو اتمّ خمسا او ستّا لكان فحلا ثم قال لم ار اقلّ شعرا من كلب وشيبان قلت فابو ذُؤَيب الهُذَلى قال فحل قلت فساعدة بن جُؤَيّة قال فحل قلت فابو خِراش الهذلى قال فحل قلت فاعشى هَمْدان قال هو من الفحول وهو اسلامى كثير الشعر وسالت الاصمعى عن كعب بن سعد الغَنَوى قال ليس من الفحول الا فى المَرْثية فانه ليس فى الدنيا مثلها قال وكان يقال له كعب الأمثال وسألته عن خُفاف ابن نَدْبة وعنترة والزِبْرِقان بن بدر قال هؤلاء اشعر الفرسان ومثلهم عبّاس بن مِرْداس السُلَمى لم يقل انهم من الفحول وبِشْر بن ابى خازم[4] وسمعت ابا عمرو بن العلا يقول قصيدتُه التى على الراء أَلحقتْه بالفحول

أَلا بانَ الخَليطُ ولَمْ يُدانى وقَلبُكَ فى الظَعائنِ مُستعارُ[5]

قلت فالاسود بن يعفر النَهْشَلى قال يشبه الفحول قلت أرأيت

1) Ms. اثنتى عشرة. 2) Ms. اربع عشرة. 3) Ms. حلف.

4) Very often written حازم; thus *e. g.* Aghānī and Index, Yāqūt (see Index), Lane, *Lex.* s. v. عور, etc.

5) See Yāqūt I, 76, where the verse (in the recension of as-Sukkarī) is given in what appears to be the more primitive form, with يزاروا in place of يدانى. Yāqūt probably cites other portions of the same *qaṣīda* in I, 393 f., IV, 10, 47, 128, 480. So too, perhaps, the verse given in the *Lisān* and Lane s. v. عور.

عمرو بن شاس الأَسَدى ما قلت فيه[1] (fol. 6) قال ليس بفحل هو دون هؤلاء قلت فلَبيد بن ربيعة قال ليس بفحل وقال لى مرّة اخرى كان رجلا صالحا كأنه ينفى عنه جودة الشعر وقال لى مرّة شعر لبيد كانّه طَيْلَسانٌ طَبَرِىّ يعنى انه جيّد الصنعة وليست له حلاوة قال وجرادة بن عُمَيلة العَنَزى له اشعار تشبه اشعار الفحول وهى قصار وهذا البيت له

أَنّى ٱهتديتِ وكنتِ غَيْرَ دَليلةٍ   شَهِدَتْ عليكِ بما فعلتِ شُهودُ

قلت فأَوس بن غَلْفاء الهُجَيْمى قال لو كان قال عشرين قصيدة لحق بالفحول ولكنه قُطع به قال وعميرة بن طارق اليربوعى من رؤوس الفرسان هو الذى اسر قابُوس بن المُنْذِر وسألته عن خِداش بن زهير العامرى قال هو فحل قلت فكعب بن زهير بن ابى سُلْمَى قال ليس بفحل قلت فزيد الخيل الطائى قال من الفرسان قلت فسُلَيْك بن السُلَكة قال ليس من الفحول ولا من الفرسان ولكنه من الذين كانوا يَغْزون فيَعْدُون على ارجلهم فيختلسون قال ومثله ابن بَرّاقة الهَمْدانى ومثله حاجز الثُمالى من السَرْويين وتأبّط شرّا واسمه ثابت بن جابر والشَنْفَرَى الأَزْدى السَرْوى وليس المُنْتَشِر منهم ولكن الاعلم الهذلى منهم قال وبالحجاز منهم وبالسراة اكثر من ثلاثين يعنى الذين يعدون على ارجلهم ويختلسون قال وسَلامة بن جَنْدَل لو كان زاد شيئا كان فحلا قال والمُتلمّس راس فحول ربيعة قال ودريد بن الصِمّة من فحول الفرسان قال ودريد فى بعض شعره اشعر من الذبيانى وكاد يغلب الذبيانى قلت فاعشى باهلة امن الفحول هو قال نعم وله مَرْثية ليس فى الدنيا مثلها وهى[2]

إنّى أَتَتْنى لِسانٌ لا أُسَرُّ بها   مِن عَلْوُ لا كَذِبٌ فيها ولا سَخَرُ[3]

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1) Ms. منه.   3) Ms. سَخَرُ.

2) The whole poem, Jamh. 135 ff. This opening verse also cited, in somewhat varying form, in the larger native lexicons, s. v. علو.

(fol. 7) قال[1] وولد العجّاج فى الجاهلية وكان حُميد الأرقط يُشذّب الرجز وينقّحه وينقّيه قال ورايته يستجيد بعض رجز ابى النجم ويضعّف بعضا لان له رديئا كثيرا قال مرة لا يعجبنى شاعر اسمه الفضل بن قُدامة يعنى ابا النجم قال ابو حاتم وسألت الاصمعى عن القُحَيْف العامرى الذى قال فى النساء قال ليس بفصيح ولا حجّة وسألته عن زياد الاعجم فقال حجّة لم يتعلق عليه بلحن وكنيته ابو أُمامة قلت فاخبرنى عن عبد بنى الحَسْحاس قال هو فصيح وهو زنجى اسود قال وابو[2] دلامة عبد رايته مولّد حبشى قلت افصيحا[3] كان قال هو صالح الفصاحة قال وابو عطاء السندى عبد أُخْرَبُ مشقوق الاذن قلت أَوَكان[4] فى الاعراب قال لا ولكنه فصيح قال عبد العزيز بن مروان[5] لايمن بن خريم[6] الاسدى كيف ترى[7] مولاى يعنى نُصَيْبا قال هو اشعر اهل جلدته وكان اسود قال وعمر بن ابى ربيعة مولّد وهو حجّة سمعت ابا عمرو بن العلاء يحتجّ فى النحو بشعره ويقول هو حجّة وفَضالة بن شَريك الاسدى وعبد الله بن الزبير الاسدى وابن الرُقَيّات هؤلاء مولّدون وشعرهم حجّة ورايته طعن فى الأُقَيْشر ولم يلتفت الى شعره وقال ولا يقال الّا رَجُلٌ شُرَطى فقلت قال الاقيشر[8]

إنّما يَشْرَبُ[9] مِن أموالنا   فٱسألوا الشُرْطىَّ ما هذا الغَضَبْ

فقال ذاك مولّد قال وابن هَرْمة[10] ثبت فصيح قال وابن أُذَيْنة ثبت فى طبقة ابن هرمة وهو دونه فى الشعر وقد كان مالك يروى

1) It is possible that something is missing here. 2) Ms. ابو.

3) Ms. افصيح. 4) Ms. وكان. 5) Ms. مودت (sic).

6) Ms. حزيم, corrected (by Landberg?) to خزيم. Often written خزيم, see however Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, I, 79, also Agh. XXI, 7.

7) Ms. يرى. 8) Agh. X, 91.

9) So orig. Ms., but corrected by copyist to نشرب. See note on the Translation.

10) Ms. هَرمة.

عنه الفقه قال وطفيل الكِنانى مثل ابن هرمة قال ويزيد بن ضبّة مولى لثقيف قال قال يزيد بن ضبّة الف قصيدة فاقتسمتها العرب فذهبت بها قال الاصمعى لم يكن بعد رؤبة وابى (fol. 8) نُخَيْلة اشعر من جَنْدَل الطُّهَوى وابى طَوْق وخِطام المُجاشعى ويلقب خطامَ الريح قال وكان ابن مُفرّغ من مولّدى البصرة قال حدّثنى الاصمعى قال اخبرنى وهب بن جرير بن حازم قال قال ابى(1 كنت اروى لأُمَيّة ثلثمائة قصيدة قال فقلت اين كتابه قال استعاره فلان فذهب به حدثنى الاصمعى قال كان يقال اشعر الناس مغلّبو مُضَر حُمَيْد والراعى وابن مُقْبِل فامّا الراعى فغلبه جرير وغلبه خَنْزَر رجل من بنى بكر والجعدى غلبته ليلى الاخيليّة وسوّار ابن الحيا وابن مقبل غلبه النجاشى من بنى الحرث بن كعب وحميد كل من هاجاه غلبه قال ابن احمر لم يهاج احدا قال وفُسْحُم شاعر جاهلى مُفْلِق(2 ولم ينسبه قال وكان النجاشى بن الحارثيّة(3 شرب الخمر فضربه على بن ابى طالب رضه مائة سوط ثمانين للسكر وعشرين لحرمة رمضان وكان وجده(4 فى رمضان سكران فلما ضربه ذهب الى معوية فمدحه *ونال من(5 على رضه(6 قال الاصمعى جامَعَ [زهير](7 قوما من يهود اى قارَبهم فسمع بذكر المَعاد فقال فى قصيدته

يُؤَخَّرْ فيُوضَعْ فى كتابٍ فيُدَّخَرْ ليومِ الحسابِ أو يُعَجَّلْ فيُنْقَمِ(8

1) Ms. انى. 2) Ms. مقلق. 3) Ms الحيثية. 4) Ms. وجده.

5) Ms. وقال فى. In a marginal note Goldziher suggests the reading ونال instead of وقال. This change seems to me to necessitate reading من in place of فى. I have adopted both emendations. If the reading of the Ms. is retained, we must suppose that a passage has been lost here; a supposition which may seem to be supported by the absence of the name (Zuhair) in what immediately follows. 6) Something missing here?

7) This name is wanting in the Ms., but fortunately the following lines are very well known as belonging to Zuhair; Arnold, *Moʿall.* p. 78, Ahlw. 95, Nöldeke, *Die Moʿallaqa Zuhair's*, pp. 16, 30, etc.; see also my *Commercial Terms in the Koran*, p. 10.

8) Ms. فينتقم.

قال الاصمعى سئل شيخ عالم عن الشعراء فقال كان الشعر فى الجاهلية فى ربيعة وصار فى قيس ثم جاء الاسلام فصار فى تميم قلت للاصمعى لِمَ لَمْ يذكر اليمن [قال][1] انما اراد بنى نزار فاما هؤلاء كلهم فاذا تعلّموا من راس الشعراء امرئ القيس وانما كان الشعر فى اليمن وقال اى الدنيا مثل فرسان قيس وشعراؤهم[2] الفرسان فذكر عدّة منهم عنترة وخفاف بن ندبة وعبّاس بن مرداس ودريد بن الصِمّة وقال لى مرّة دريد وخفاف اشعر الفرسان حدّثنى الاصمعى [قال][1] ذهب امية بن ابى الصلت فى الشعر (fol. 9) بعامّة ذكر الآخرة و[ذهب عنترة ب]عامّة[3] ذكر الحرب وذهب عمر بن ابى ربيعة بعامّة ذكر النساء[4] قال الاصمعى لقى رجل كثيّر عَزّة وهو كثير بن عبد الرحمن الخزاعى ابن ابى جمعة فقال له يا ابا صخر اى الناس اشعر قال الذى قال

آثرتُ إدْلاجى على لَيْلِ حُرّةٍ هَضِيمِ الحَشا حُسّانةِ المتجرَّدِ[5]

وهذا للحطيئة قال ثم تركه حينا حتى اذا ظنّه قد نسى ذلك لقيه فقال يا ابا صخر اىّ الناس اشعر قال الذى يقول

قِفا نَبْكِ مِنْ ذِكْرَى حَبيبٍ ومَنْزِلِ[6]

يعنى أمرا القيس وهو اوّل من بكى الديار وسير[7] الظعن قال الاصمعى انعت الناس لمركوب من الابل عيينة[8] بن مرداس وهو الذى يقال له [ابن][9] فَسْوة وانعت الناس لمحلوب فى القصيد الراعى وانعتهم لمحلوب فى الرجز ابن لَجا التيمى[10] واسمه عمر قال الاصمعى

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1) Ms. omits. 2) Ms. وشعرائهم. 3) Bracketed words om. in Ms.

4) This saying also quoted from al-Aṣma'ī in Agh. III, 188, below.

5) Dīwān, Cairo 1323, p. 21; ed. Goldziher, ZDMG. 46, 203; Agh. II, 61; *Lisān*, s. v. دلج.

6) The opening line of Imrulqais' *Mu'allaqa*.

7) Ms. وسير. 8) Ms. عتيبة. 9) Ms. om. **10) Ms.** التميمى.

اىّ الناس اشعر قبيلة فقيل النُّجْل العيون فى ظِلال الفَسِيل يعنى الانصار قال ويقال الزرق العيون فى اصول العضاه يعنى بنى قيس بن ثعلبة وذكر منهم المرقّش والاعشى والمسيّب بن علس حدثنا الاصمعى قال حدثنا ابن ابى الزناد قال أُنْشِد حسّانُ شعرَ عمرو بن العاص فقال ما هو شاعر ولكنه عاقل قال الاصمعى سئل الاخطل عن شعر كثيّر فقال حجازى يَكِد(1) البرد قال الاصمعى يوما أَشْعَرْتَ ان ليلى اشعر من الخنساء وقال لى مرّة الزبرقان فارس شاعر غير مطيل وقال مالك بن نُوَيْرة شاعر فارس مطيل قال ليس فى الدنيا قبيلة على كثرتها اقلّ شعرا من بنى شيبان وكلب قال وليس لكلب شاعر فى الجاهليّة قديم قال وكلب مثل شيبان اربع مرار حدثنا ابو حاتم قال حدثنا الاصمعى قال قيل لحسان من اشعر الناس قال اشعرهم (fol. 10) رجلا ام قبيلة قيل(2) قال بل قبيلة قال هذيل قال الاصمعى فيهم اربعون شاعرا مفلقا(3) وكلهم يعدو على رجله ليس فيهم فارس قال ابو حاتم سالت الاصمعى فمن اشعرهم رجلا واحدا قال اما حسان فلم يقل فى الواحد شيئا وانا اقول اشعرهم واحدا النابغة الذبيانى وهو ابن خمسين سنة وانما قال الشعر قليلا وقال النابغة الجعدى أُفْحِمَ ثلاثين سنة بعد ما قال الشعر ثم نبغ قال والشعر الاول من قوله جيّد بالغ والآخر كلّه مسروق وليس بجيّد قال ابو حاتم قال الشعر وهو ابن ثلاثين سنة ثم افحم ثلاثين سنة ثم نبغ فقال ثلاثين سنة قلت للاصمعى كيف شعر الفرزدق قال تسعةُ اعشار شعره سَرِقةٌ قال وأمّا جرير فله ثلاثون قصيدة ما علمته سرق شيئًا قطُّ الّا نِصْفَ بيت قال لا ادرى لعله *وافق بينى شيئا قلت ما هو هجاء فلم يخبر(4) قال ابو حاتم قد رايته

1) كذا inserted here in Landberg's hand. See note on the Translation.

2) Ms. قال.

3) Ms. معلّقا.

4) This passage is queried in the Ms. The text is corrupt, and it may be that something is missing.

انا بعد فى شعره قال ابو حاتم حدثنا الاصمعى قال اظنّ[1] جميل بن مَعْمَر ولد فى الجاهليّة قال والاحوص مولّد نبت بقُبَاء حتى هرم حدثنا الاصمعى قال قال فلان انما كثير كُرْبَجٌ يعنى صاحب كربج قال يبيع الخيط والقطران قال الاصمعى كان ابو ذُؤيب راوية ساعدة وشذّ[2] عليه فى اشياء كثيرة * فذكر فى قافية والنّح فى شعرهم[3] قال واستجاد هذه الجيمية لابى ذؤيب قال ليس فى الدنيا احد يقوم للشماخ فى الزائية والجيمية الا ان ابا ذؤيب اجاد[4] فى جيميّته حدّا لا يقوم له احد قال هى التى قال فيها

بَرِكٌ من جُذامَ لَبِيجُ[5]

قال الاصمعى قال النَمِر بن تَوْلَب جاهلى اسلامى قال وقال الفرزدق للنَوار امراته كيف شعرى من شعر جرير فقالت شَرَكَكَ[6] فى حلوه وغلبك على مرّه قال الاصمعى قال سمعت ابا سفيان بن العلاء يقول قلت لرؤبة كيف رجز ابى (fol. 11) النجم عندك[7] فقال كلمته تلك عليها لعنة الله لانه استجادها

الحمدُ لله الوَهُوبِ المُجْزِلِ[8]

حدّثنا الاصمعى قال الكميت بن زيد ليس بحجّة لانه مولّد وكذلك الطِرِمّاح قال وذو الرُمّة حجّة لانه بدوىّ ولكن ليس يشبه شعره شعر العرب ثم قال الّا واحدة التى تشبه العرب وهى التى يقول فيها

والبابُ دونَ ابى غَسّانَ مسدودُ

تم والله اعلم

م

1) Ms. ظن. 2) Ms. وشد. 3) The passage cannot be right as it stands. It is queried in the Ms. 4) Ms. احاد.

5) Dīwān, Yale University Library, Ms. 303, fol. 103a; Haffner, *Texte zur arab. Lexikographie*, 116; *Lisān* s. v. لبج ,ضرع ,شيب ,جذم ,برك; Yāqūt I, 852, III, 244.

6) Ms. شركك. 7) Ms. عبدك. 8) Agh. IX, 81, 10.

فهرس الشعراء والأعلام

The curse of Allah is upon this phrase of his, because *he* thought it excellent:

Praise to Allah, the bountiful giver.

Al-Aṣmaʿī said, moreover: Al-Kumait ibn Zaid was not normative (حُجَّة), because he was an Arab only by adoption; the same was true of aṭ-Ṭirimmāḥ. D̲ū 'r-Rumma was normative, for he was a bedawī. His poetry, however, is not like the poetry of the true Arabs; excepting (he added) one poem in which he resembles them; that one, namely, in which he says:

And on Abū Ghassān the door is barred.

ancient poet in the Jāhilīya, and yet Kalb was four times as good as Šaibān.

Said Abū Ḥātim: We have the following from al-Aṣma'ī. Some one asked of Ḥassān: Whom do you call foremost in poetry? He answered: (fol. 10) Do you mean What man? or What tribe? I meant the tribe. Huḏail is the foremost, he replied. (Said al-Aṣma'ī: There were in that tribe forty notable poets. They were all men who ran on foot, not one of them was a knight.) Said Abū Ḥātim: I asked al-Aṣma'ī: What one man, then, was the foremost of the poets? He replied: Ḥassān did not express his opinion as to the individual, but I will give mine. The one greatest of them all was an-Nābigha of Ḏubyān, when he was fifty years of age. Nor did he compose much poetry. As for an-Nābigha al-Ja'dī, on the other hand, the flow of his poetry was stopped for thirty years after his first productive period, and then the stream flowed again. The poetry of his first period was extremely good, but all his later productions were unoriginal (مسروق) and of poor quality. (Said Abū Ḥātim: He began composing poetry when he was thirty years old; then he ceased for thirty years; then the flow was renewed for thirty years more.) I said to al-Aṣma'ī: How about the poetry of al-Farazdaq? He replied: Nine tenths of his poetry was borrowed. As for Jarīr, he composed thirty *qaṣīda*'s, and I do not know that he ever plagiarized anything except one half-verse. . . . . .[1]) According to Abū Ḥātim, al-Aṣma'ī said: I think that Jamīl ibn Ma'mar was born of a slave mother; he flourished in Qubā' until his old age.

This from al-Aṣma'ī: Some one once said of Kuṯayyir that he was a small shop selling thread and tar. Said al-Aṣma'ī: Abū Ḏu'aib was an excellent authority, and many instances of exceptional usage were based on his poetry. . . . . .[2]) He (al-Aṣma'ī) admired this *jīm*-poem by Abū Ḏu'aib; No one in the world, he said, could equal aš-Šammāḫ in his poems in *zāy* and *jīm* except Abū Ḏu'aib, who in his poem in *jīm* reached such a limit of excellence as no other could equal; namely, in the poem containing the words:

The kneeling camel herd of Juḏām.

Said al-Aṣma'ī: an-Namir ibn Taulab flourished both in the Jāhilīya and in Islam. He also narrated: Al-Farazdaq once said to his wife, Nawār: How does my verse compare with that of Jarīr? She answered: He equalled you in the sweet, and conquered you in the bitter. Al-Aṣma'ī said further: I heard Abū Sufyān ibn al-'Alā' say that he once asked of Ru'ba: What do you think of the *rajaz*-poetry of Abū 'n-Najm? (fol. 11) He replied:

1) The text seems to be defective here, and I have left a passage untranslated.

2) See the note on the text.

I heard this from al-Aṣma'ī: Umayya ibn Abu 's-Ṣalt was supreme and unapproached in poetry (fol. 9) which had for its subject the world to come; 'Antara, where the subject was war; and 'Umar ibn Abū Rabī'a, where the subject was women.

According to al-Aṣma'ī, some one once met Kuṯayyir, the lover of 'Azza (this was Kuṯayyir ibn 'Abd ar-Raḥmān, al-Ḫuzā'ī, Ibn Abū Jum'a), and said to him: O Abū Ṣaḫr, who was the greatest poet? He answered: The one who said:

I count my night ride better than a night with one free-born,
Slender of waist, most beautiful where stripped of clothing.

Now this was a verse of al-Ḥuṭai'a's[1]). Thereupon he left him for a while, until he thought he had forgotten the incident; then he met him again, and said: O Abū Ṣaḫr, who was the greatest poet? He answered: The one who said:

Stand, let us weep at the remembrance of a beloved one and her abode;

meaning Imrulqais, who was the first of the poets to depict weeping over deserted dwelling-places and the journeying of the howdas.

Said al-Aṣma'ī: The best at describing riding-camels was 'Uyaina ibn Mirdās (the one who was called Ibn Faswa[2])); for description of milch-camels, the best in the *qaṣīda* form was ar-Rā'ī, and in *rajaz* verse Ibn Laja' at-Taimī (whose name was 'Umar). Said al-Aṣma'ī: What tribe or company of men ranked highest in the poetry it produced? Some say, The large-eyed ones in the shady palm-gardens, meaning the Anṣār; others say, The blue-eyed ones at the root of the thorn-bushes, meaning the Banī Qais ibn Ṯa'laba; and he mentioned of their number al-Muraqqiš, al-A'šā, and al-Musayyab ibn 'Alas. Said al-Aṣma'ī: I heard the following from Ibn Abū 'z-Zinād. Ḥassān [ibn Ṯābit] heard some one recite verses by 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣī, and said: He is no poet, but a man of sharp wit. Said al-Aṣma'ī: Al-Aḫṭal was asked about the poetry of Kuṯayyir, and replied: A Hijāzite, who fastens the cloak firmly[3]). Al-Aṣma'ī once said: Do you know that Lailā was a better poet than al-Ḫansā'? And he said to me on another occasion: Az-Zibriqān was a poet-knight (فارس شاعر) who did not make a long story; Mālik ibn Nuwaira, on the other hand, was a poet-knight who did make a long story. No tribe in the world, he said, was less productive of poetry, in proportion to its number, than the Banī Šaibān and Kalb. In the latter tribe there was not a single

1) The same story in different form, and on other authority, in Agh. II, 61. See also the anecdote there, at the bottom of the page.

2) See especially Agh. XIX, 143.

3) What the phrase (يكلد البرد) means here, I do not know. It evidently puzzled Landberg also; see the note on the text.

'Ḥiṭām of the Wind"). Ibn Mufarrigh was one of the *muwallads*[1]) of Baṣra. Al-Aṣma'ī narrates that he heard the following from Wahb ibn Jarīr ibn Ḥāzim. My father once said to me: I was wont to recite three hundred *qaṣīda*'s of Umayya. I asked: Where is the collection now? He replied: Such-a-one borrowed it and carried it off.

Said al-Aṣma'ī: It used to be said that the best of all the poets were "the Vanquished of Muḍar", namely Ḥumaid, ar-Rā'ī, and Ibn Muqbil[2]). As for ar-Rā'ī, he was vanquished by Jarīr, and also by Ḥanzar, one of the Banī Bakr. Lailā of Aḫyal overcame al-Ja'dī, and so also did Sawwār [ibn Aufā] ibn al-Ḥayā[3]). Ibn Muqbil was beaten by an-Najāšī, one of the Banī 'l-Ḥāriṯ ibn Ka'b[4]). As for Ḥumaid, every one who attacked him vanquished him. Ibn Aḥmar[5]) (said he) did not satirise any one. Fusḥum[6]) was mentioned by him as a notable poet of the Jāhilīya, but he did not give his lineage. He said of an-Najāšī ibn al-Ḥāriṯīya: He was guilty of wine-drinking, and 'Alī ibn Abū Ṭālib punished him by beating with a hundred stripes; eighty for drunkenness, and twenty for violating Ramaḍān (for he had found him drunk in the sacred month). So when he had been beaten, he went away to Mu'āwiya, and composed verse in praise of him, and vituperated 'Alī[7]).

Said al-Aṣma'ī: [Zuhair] became intimate with certain Jews, and learned from them about the resurrection. Therefore he said in his *qaṣīda*:

Either it is postponed, put down in a book, and stored
For the Day of Account; or else 'tis hastened, and soon avenged.

Said al-Aṣma'ī: A learned šaiḫ was asked about the poets, and replied: In the time before Muḥammad, poetry flourished first in Rabī'a; then it went over to Tamīm. I said to al-Aṣma'ī: Why did he not mention Yemen? He replied: He was only speaking of the Banī Nizār; as for these, they all learned the poetic art from Imrulqais, the chief of the poets; Yemen was the home of poetry. And he said: Are there any in the world equal to the knights of Qais? their poets were indeed the *fursān*. Then he mentioned a number, among them 'Antara, Ḫufāf ibn Nadba, 'Abbās ibn Mirdās, and Duraid ibn aṣ-Ṣimma. On another occasion he said to me: Duraid and Ḫufāf were the best poets of the *fursān*[8]).

1) Arabs by adoption, not of pure blood. Generally meaning one born of a slave mother.

2) The name of Nābigha Ja'dī seems to be accidentally omitted here; see just below.

3) Agh. IV, 131, 6 from bottom, 132f.

4) *Kāmil* 187, 6.

5) *i. e.* 'Amr ibn Aḥmar al-Bāhilī, another of the poets of Muḍar.

6) So pointed in Ms. I have found no other mention of him.

7) See the note on the text.

8) Cf. the similar estimate given above, and see the Introduction.

Said Abū Ḥātim: I asked al-Aṣma‘ī about al-Quḥaif al-‘Āmirī — who made verses about women — and he said: His diction is neither classically elegant nor normative [1]). Upon my asking him about Ziyād al-A‘jam, he said: He is normative; no solecism has been attached to him; and his *kunya* was Abū Umāma. I said: Tell me about the slave of the Banī ’l-Ḥasḥās [2]). He replied: His verse was classically elegant, though he was a negro. Abū Dulāma was also a slave, I think he was the adopted son of an Abyssinian. I asked: Was his poetry classically chaste? He replied: It was of good quality in this regard. Moreover, Abū ‘Aṭā’ as-Sindī was a slave whose ear was pierced. Was he then one of the genuine Arabs?, I queried. No, but his diction was chaste. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn Marwān once said to Aiman ibn Ḫuraim of Asad: What do you think of my *maulā*? meaning Nuṣaib. Aiman answered: He is a better poet than any other man of his skin (for he was a negro) [3]). Furthermore, ‘Umar ibn Abū Rabī‘a was the son of a slave mother, yet his poetry was considered normative; I have heard Abū ‘Amr ibn al-‘Alā’ cite it as proof of correct grammatical usage, and formally declare it to be such. Also Faḍāla ibn Šarīk of Asad, and ‘Abdallāh ibn az-Zubair of the same tribe, and Ibn ar-Ruqayyāt [4]), these all were sons of slave parents, yet their verse is normative. I saw, however, that he disparaged al-Uqaišir, and did not feel inclined toward his poetry; he said of him: He was only the "policeman" poet. Yes, I answered, it was al-Uqaišir who said:

You see, he 's drinking at our own expense!
So ask the policeman, Wherefore all this wrath? [5])

He was slave-born, al-Aṣma‘ī continued. Ibn Harma was both reliable and elegant in his compositions; Ibn Uḏaina was reliable, and in the same class (طبقة) as Ibn Harma, but was inferior to him in his poetry [6]). Mālik cited traditions on his authority, in his jurisprudence. Ṭufail of Kināna is also to be classed with Ibn Harma. Yazīd ibn Ḍabba was a *maulā* of the tribe Ṯaqīf. He composed a thousand *qaṣīda*'s, but the Arabs divided them up and carried them off.

Al-Aṣma‘ī said, moreover: After Ru’ba and Abū Nuḫaila (fol. 8) there were no poets more worthy of the name than Jandal aṭ-Ṭuhawī and Abū Ṭauq and Ḫiṭām al-Mujāši‘ī (who was nicknamed

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1) More exactly: to be used as proof (حجّة) of correct usage.
2) *i. e.* Suḥaim.
3) The whole anecdote is given in Agh. I, 131.
4) *i. e.* ‘Ubaidallāh ibn Qais ar-Ruqayyāt.
5) The story of al-Uqaišir's adventure with the policeman is told in Agh. X, 87 f., 91. According to the latter passage, the officer of the law, who had come to arrest al-Uqaišir for drunkenness, was himself made tipsy by wine which the poet supplied to him by means of a tube passed through the keyhole of the barricaded door.
6) Cf. Agh. IV, 113, 2 f.

I asked him about Ḫidāš ibn Zuhair al-ʻĀmirī, and he replied: He is a *faḥl.*

Kaʻb ibn Zuhair ibn Abū Sulmā?

Not a *faḥl.*

Zaid al-Ḫail aṭ-Ṭā'ī?

One of the *fursān.*

Sulaik ibn as-Sulaka?

Not one of the *fuḥūl*, nor was he one of the *fursān.* He belonged to the number of those who used to make forays, running on their own feet and taking plunder. Another of the same sort was Ibn Barrāqa of Hamdān[1]), and still others were Ḥājiz[2]) aṯ-Ṯumālī, of the *Sarwiyyūn*[3]), and Ta'abbaṭa Šarran (whose name was Ṯābit ibn Jābir), and aš-Šanfarā al-Azdī, the *Sarwī.* Al-Muntašir was not of their number, but al-Aʻlam of Huḏail belonged to them. Some of them dwelt in the Ḥijāz, and in the Sarāt there were more than thirty (*i. e.*, those who used to run on their own feet and take plunder).

He also said: If Salāma ibn Jandal had accomplished somewhat more, he would have been a *faḥl.* Al-Mutalammis is the chief *faḥl* of Rabīʻa. Duraid ibn aṣ-Ṣimma is one of the *fuḥūl* among the *fursān.* Moreover, Duraid in some of his poetry surpasses Nābigha of Ḏubyān in the art; he did, indeed, come near to vanquishing the Ḏubyānī.

I said: How about Aʻšā of Bāhila, is he one of the *fuḥūl?*

He answered: Yes, and there is an elegy of his which has not its equal in the world, namely:

There has come to me a report, at which I am not rejoiced,
From the height; a report in which there is neither lie nor mockery.

. . . . . (fol. 7) He proceeded[4]): Al-ʻAjjāj was born in the Jāhilīya. Ḥumaid al-Arqaṭ used to prune and polish and purify the *rajaz* poetry. I saw that he (al-Aṣmaʻī) pronounced some of Abū n-Najm's *rajaz* verse good, and some of it defective, for he composed much that was bad. On one occasion he said: I am not much impressed with a poet whose name is al-Faḍl ibn Qudāma (meaning Abū n-Najm).

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1) *Kāmil* 152, 19, Yāqūt III, 300.

2) Cf. Agh. XII, 49 below.

3) Those whose home was in the Sarāt, a mountainous district of Tihāma bordering on Yemen, whose inhabitants were noted for purity of speech (Yāqūt III, 66 f.: قال ابو عمرو بن العلاء افصح الناس اهل السروات). See just below, also Yāqūt III, 65 ff. (p. 65 line 8, for ارمينية read اليمن?), Hamdānī ed. Müller, pp. 48 f., 67 ff.

4) Something missing here?

Faḥl.

Abū Ḥirāš of Huḏail?

Faḥl.

Aʿšā of Hamdān?

He is one of the *fuḥūl*, though of Islām, and the author of much poetry[1]).

I asked al-Aṣmaʿī about Kaʿb ibn Saʿd al-Ghanawī; and he answered: He is not one of the *fuḥūl*, except in his elegies: in that particular no other has equalled him. He added: He used to be called "the Kaʿb of the Proverbs".

I asked him also about Ḥufāf ibn Nadba, and ʿAntara, and az-Zibriqān ibn Badr; and he replied: These are the best poets of the *fursān*[2]); and in the same rank with them is ʿAbbās ibn Mirdās of Sulaim (he did not say that they were of the *fuḥūl*), and Bišr ibn Abū Ḫāzim. I heard Abū ʿAmr ibn al-ʿAlāʾ say: His (Bišr's) *qaṣīda* rhyming in the letter *r* brought him into the company of the *fuḥūl*:

Ah, the horde has departed, without drawing near,
And thy heart, borrowed from thee, is in their howdas.

(Said Abū Ḥatim) I proceeded: What of al-Aswad ibn Yaʿfur an-Nahšalī?

He replied: He resembles (يشبه) the *fuḥūl.*

Then as to ʿAmr ibn Šaʾs al-Asadī, what do you say regarding him? (fol. 6).

He is not a *faḥl*, but is below that rank.

And Labīd ibn Rabīʿa?

No *faḥl.* Moreover, on another occasion al-Aṣmaʿī described Labīd to me as "a good man" — as though he intended to deny to him any high merit as a poet. And he once said to me: Labīd's poetry is like a mantle from Ṭabaristān; meaning that it was well woven, but without elegance.

He said also: Jarāda ibn ʿUmaila al-ʿAnazī composed some poems which resemble those of the *fuḥūl*, but they are short. This verse is one of his:

How wert thou led aright, when thou hadst no guide?
There are those who witness against thee what thou didst.

What of Aus ibn Ghalfāʾ al-Hujaimī?

If he had composed twenty *qaṣīda*'s, he would have joined the *fuḥūl*; but he is cut short of it.

He also said to me: ʿUmaira ibn Ṭāriq al-Yarbūʿī was one of the chiefs of the *fursān*; he it was who took captive Qābūs ibn al-Munḏir[3]).

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1) See the Introduction.

2) See the Introduction, and cf. Agh. XVI, 139, where Ibn Sallām's ranking of Ḥufāf in the "fifth class" of the *fursān* is mentioned.

3) Namely, at Ṭihfa. Bekrī 452, Yāqūt III, 519.

before al-Aḫṭal or after him, do not believe him. Then he said: Abū 'Amr ibn al-'Alā' also used to prefer him (to the other two); I have heard him say: If al-Aḫṭal had lived but one single day in the Jāhilīya, I would not give any poet, *jāhilī* or *islāmī*, the precedence over him[1]). Said al-Aṣma'ī: I once recited to Abū 'Amr ibn al-'Alā' a certain poem, and he said: No one of the Islamic poets could equal this, not even al-Aḫṭal.

Said Abū Ḥātim: I also asked him about al-Aghlab, whether he was a *faḥl*, among the *rajaz* poets; and he said: He is not a *faḥl* nor even successful, and his verse wearies me. And on another occasion he said to me: I only hand down from al-Aghlab two poems and a half. I said: What do you mean by the 'half'? He replied: I know two poems of his, and I used to hand down half of the one which rhymes in *qāf* — for they have lengthened it. And he continued: His children were wont to add to his poems, until they spoiled them. Said Abū Ḥātim: Isḥāq ibn al-'Abbās[2]) asked from him a *rajaz* verse of al-Aghlab, and he sought from me[3]) . . . . . I loaned him . . . . . he brought forth about twenty (poems). (fol. 5) I said: Did you not declare that you knew only two and a half? He answered me: Yes, but I have sorted those which I know, and so far as they are not his, they belong at least to others who are classically valid and trustworthy. Said Abū Ḥātim: No other man could recite so many *rajaz* verses as al-Aṣma'ī. I once heard a man of Najrān who had travelled about in the regions of Khorasān question him, saying: Such-a-one in Rai told me that you could recite twelve thousand *rajaz* poems. Yes, he answered, there are fourteen thousand *rajaz* poems which I hold in my memory. I was amazed at this, but he said to me: Most of them are short. I said: Deliver them, verse by verse, fourteen thousand verses. But he answered: Only the poetry of al-Aghlab makes the task too tiresome for me. (Said Ḫalaf: One of the sons of al-Aghlab was a man who was trustworthy in the matter of tradition and narrative, but lied about his father's poetry.)

I proceeded: What of Ḥātim aṭ-Ṭā'ī?

Ḥātim, he answered, is only counted as "noble" (يُعَدّ بكرم); he did not say that he was a *faḥl*.

And Mu'aqqir al-Bāriqī, the *ḥalīf* of the Banī Numair?

If he had completed five or six *qaṣīda*'s, he would have been a *faḥl*. Then he added: The two tribes least productive of poetry seem to have been Kalb and Šaibān.

Abū Ḏu'aib of Huḏail?

Faḥl.

Sā'ida ibn Ju'ayya[4])?

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1) The same in Agh. VII, 172, 8. 2) The governor of Baṣra.

3) The text is defective here.

4) This well known poet does not receive mention in Agh., if the Index is to be trusted.

If he had composed five *qaṣīda's* like the one which we have, he would have been a *faḥl.*

And al-Muhalhil?

No *faḥl*; but if he had produced other poems like that one of his:

O night of ours in Ḏū Jušam, turn to daylight!

he would have been the foremost *faḥl* of them all. Besides, the most of his poetry is merely attributed to him.

Abū Du'ād?

Excellent[1]). (He did not say that he was a *faḥl.*)

Ar-Rāʿī?

Not a *faḥl.*

Ibn Muqbil?

Not a *faḥl.*

Said Abū Ḥātim: I also asked al-Aṣmaʿī which of the two was the greater poet, ar-Rāʿī or Ibn Muqbil. He replied: How near to each other they stand! But, I objected, this answer does not satisfy us. Thereupon he said: The verse of ar-Rāʿī was more like that of the old and primitive poets.

Ibn Aḥmar (fol. 4) al-Bāhilī?

Not a *faḥl*; yet, though inferior to those, he stands at the head of his own division. And (he said) in my opinion (أرى أن) Mālik ibn Ḥarīm al-Hamdānī is of the *fuḥūl.* If Ṯaʿlaba ibn Ṣuʿair al-Māzinī had written five poems like his *qaṣīda*, he would have been a *faḥl.*

How about Kaʿb ibn Juʿail?

I think that he (أظنّه) is of the *fuḥūl*, but do not feel certain of it.

What do you say of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq and al-Aḫṭal?

These, if they belonged to the Jāhilīya, would have a distinguished place (in this ranking); but since they belong to Islām, I will say nothing about them.

Said Abū Ḥātim: I had often heard him prefer Jarīr to al-Farazdaq; so I said to him, on the day when ʿIṣām ibn al-Faiḍ came to see him: I wish to ask you about something, and if ʿIṣām had already heard it from you, I would not ask. I have heard you prefer Jarīr to al-Farazdaq, more than once; what will you say now about the two, and about al-Aḫṭal? So he reflected for a moment, and then recited a verse from his (al-Aḫṭal's) *qaṣīda*:

Verily I have made the night's journey of no weakling,
On a she-camel emaciated of cheek and thin of flank.

Then he recited about ten verses more, and said: If any one tells you that any man on earth ever produced the equal of this, either

1) صالح.

Faḥl.

Al-Ḥāriṯ ibn Ḥilliza?

Faḥl.

'Amr ibn Kulṯūm?

No *faḥl.*

Al-Musayyab ibn 'Alas?

Faḥl.

How about 'Adī ibn Zaid; is he a *faḥl*?

Neither stallion nor mare!

(Said Abū Ḥātim: The only reason why I asked him was because I had heard Ibn Munaḏir[1]) say that no poet should be ranked higher than 'Adī.)

What of Ḥassān ibn Ṯābit?

He is a *faḥl.*

Qais ibn al-Ḫaṭīm?

Faḥl.

The two named al-Muraqqiš?

Each of the two is a *faḥl.*

And Ibn Qamī'a?

Faḥl. (This was Qamī'a [ibn Ḏarīḥ][2]) ibn Sa'd ibn Mālik, and his *kunya* was Abū Yazīd[3])).

And Abū Zubaid?[4])

He is no *faḥl.*

Aš-Šammāḫ?

Faḥl. (And al-Aṣma'ī added: I have talked with a man who had seem the grave of aš-Šammāḫ in Armenia.)

How about Muzarrid, his brother?

He was not inferior to aš-Šammāḫ, yet he injured his poetry by introducing too much satire.

Now al-Aṣma'ī had told me, before this, that the men of Kūfa were wont to place al-A'šā in the very first rank of poets[5]); also. Ḫalaf[6]) was accustomed to say that no poet should be ranked above him. (Said Abū Ḥātim: This was because he composed poetry in every sort of meter, and used every variety of rhyme.)

I proceeded: What of 'Urwa ibn al-Ward?

He answered: He was a noble poet (شاعر كريم), but not a *faḥl.*

How about al-Ḥuwaidira?

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1) Muḥammad ibn Munāḏir (often Manāḏir), Agh. XVII, 9 ff.

2) Agh. XVI, 163.

3) There was another Ibn Qamī'a of some note, namely he who killed Mus'ab ibn 'Umair at the battle of Uhud, mistaking him for the Prophet Muḥammad (Hiš. 566 f., Agh. XIV, 19). This Qamī'a was of the Laiṯ tribe.

4) Ḥarmala ibn al-Munḏir aṭ-Ṭā'ī.

5) Apparently, the original context of this passage is to be found above, where al-A'šā was mentioned; see also the note on the text.

6) Cf. Agh. VIII, 78, where al-A'šā is under discussion, and Ḫalaf al-Aḥmar refuses to decide the question of superiority.

They are compelled to have the sharp bit of the bridle put on,
As if it were put on the trunk of a palm that is stripped of its bark[1]).

(You say: I constrained him (*rāwadtuhū*) to this or that, meaning the same as *ḥāwaltuhū*, and one may say also *aradtuhu*. Here he is describing the neck of the animal ....)

. . . .

.... and he [*i. e.* an-Nābigha *al-Jaʿdī*] was most excellent in describing horses[2]). Thereupon he recited:

Holding firm the sutures of the skull, or he had been ready to neigh[3]).

He also excelled in that *qaṣīda* of his in which he says:

Those 'generous gifts' of yours — not even two cups of milk,
Which were made gray with water, and at last turned to urine.

(Said Abū Ḥātim) I asked: What was his intent in that, for this line enters into the verse of another poet[4]). He replied: When Sawwār [ibn Aufā] ibn al-Ḥayā' al-Qušairī said: 'We have among us him who searched for his foot[5]), him who made Ḥājib his captive, and those who gave the milk to drink', an-Nābigha thereupon composed the verse: (fol. 3)

Those generous gifts of yours — not even two cups of milk.

Said al-Aṣmaʿī: If this *qaṣīda* had only been written by the older Nābigha, it would have reached the utmost bound of merit.

I then asked him: How about al-Aʿšā, the Aʿšā of the Banī Qais ibn Taʿlaba?

He replied: He is not a *faḥl*[6]).

And ʿAlqama ibn ʿAbada?

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1) See Krenkow, loc. cit., p. 870.

2) On the lacuna here, see the note on the text.

3) It is perhaps useless to attempt to translate without knowing the context. On the شؤون of a horse, see Ibn Sīda's *Kitāb al-Muḥaṣṣaṣ* VI, 138, and on أراد ليزفرا see Jambara, 147, lines 4f.

4) See Brockelmann, loc. cit., p. 118, where the story of the verse is told, and the original author is said to have been Abū 'ṣ-Ṣalt ibn ar-Rabīʿa at-Taqafī.

5) Namely Ḥubāš ibn Qais, whose foot was cut off in the battle of the Yarmūk, while he was showing great valor; see especially Belādurī 137, where the verse is given:

ومنّا ابنُ عَتّابٍ وناشدُ رِجْلِهِ ومنّا الذى أدّى الى الحىّ حاجبا

The Ḥājib who was made captive was Ḥājib ibn Zurāra. The story of his capture by Mālik ibn Salama (known as Dū 'r-Ruqaiba) is told in Agh. X, 42f.

6) This judgment is all the more remarkable in view of the high esteem in which Abū ʿAmr held al-Aʿšā (Agh. VIII, 78, etc.). On the probable disarrangement of the Ms. at this point, see below.

the comparison of the two[1] .... He answered: No; Abū 'Amr[2], when some one asked him, in my hearing: Was an-Nābigha, or Zuhair, the greater poet? replied: Zuhair was not worthy to be an-Nābigha's hireling. He (al-Aṣma'ī) added: Aus ibn Ḥajar was a greater poet than Zuhair, but an-Nābigha took away from him some of his glory[3]. Aus composed this:

With an army for which you see the field too strait,

in a poem of his; but an-Nābigha followed it with some lines of his own, bringing its conceit, and something besides, into a single half-verse: (fol. 2)

An army, for which the field becomes too strait,
Leaving the ridges behind as though they were plains[4].

Abū Ḥātim also reported from al-Aṣma'ī the following: A šaiḫ of the people of Najd said that Ṭufail al-Ghanawī used to be called *Muḥabbir*[5], in the pre-Islamic time, because of the beauty of his verse. And in my own opinion, said al-Aṣma'ī, in some of his poetry he surpassed Imrulqais; al-Aṣma'ī says it. Then he added: And yet Ṭufail borrowed something from Imrulqais; moreover, it is said that much of the poetry of Imrulqais belonged to certain beggars[6] who attached themselves to him; also, 'Amr ibn Qamī'a went in his company to the Byzantine court[7]. Mu'āwiya ibn Abū Sufyān used to say: Summon for me Ṭufail, for his verse is more like that of the ancient poets than is the verse of Zuhair, and he is a *faḥl*[8]. Al-Aṣma'ī proceeded: It is a wonder that an-Nābigha never gave any description of a mare except in the one verse:

With her nostrils yellow from [the blossoms of] the *jarjār* plant.

Indeed, an-Nābigha, Aus, and Zuhair were not wont to give fine descriptions of horses; but Ṭufail, on the contrary, reached the almost bound of excellence in this characterization, and he was a *faḥl*. Then he recited these lines of his:

1) See note on the text. 2) Abū 'Amr ibn al-'Alā', † 154/770.

3) Cf. Brockelmann, *Nöldeke-Festschrift*, p. 117 above.

4) That is, they were trampled flat by the multitude of the army.

5) Literally, one who adorns. See especially Goldziher's discussion of the uses of this term, *Abhandlungen*, I, 129—131.

6) "Poor devils", صعاليك.

7) Agh. XVI, 163, 166 above, and elsewhere.

8) The question of al-Aṣma'ī's dating of the poet Ṭufail (see Krenkow, JRAS. 1907, pp. 815, 820) is here settled. The *original* meaning of the statements quoted by Krenkow from Agh. XIV, 88 must have been simply this, that Ṭufail was older than Nābigha *Ja'dī* (with whom he is all the time being compared), and the foremost (أقدم) of the poets of Qais 'Ailān.

Translation.

Al-Aṣma'ī's Ranking of the Earliest Arabian Poets.

Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Duraid al-Azdı reports the following from Abu Ḥātim Sahl ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Utmān as-Sijzī. Said Abū Ḥātim: On more than one occasion I heard al-Aṣma'ī 'Abd al-Malik ibn Quraib pronounce an-Nābigha of Dubyān superior to the other pre-Mohammedan poets. I myself also asked him — and it was the last question that I put to him, only a short time before his death — Who stands first among the *Fuḥūl*? He replied: an-Nābigha of Dubyān; but added: In my opinion, no one ever equalled the verses of Imrulqais:

Their good fortune guarded them through their kinsfolk —
It is on the less fortunate that vengeance falls!

Said Abū Ḥātim: When he saw that I was writing down what he said, he reflected for a moment and then proceeded: No, the first of them all in excellence is Imrulqais; his were the highest honor and the precedence, and they all drew upon his poetry and followed his canons; I could almost say that he gave an-Nābigha of Dubyān his place among the *fuḥūl*. Then I asked (said Abū Ḥātim): What is the meaning of the term *faḥl*?[1]) He replied: It means that one has a marked superiority over his fellows, like the superiority of a thoroughbred stallion over the mere colts; and he added: it is the same thing which is meant by the verse of Jarīr:

The young offspring of the milch-camel, when he is fastened with the yoke-rope,
Can not withstand the fierce attack of the seasoned and mighty ones[2]).

Said Abū Ḥātim: Some one asked him, Who of all men is the greatest poet? He answered, an-Nābigha. The other continued: Do you give no one the precedence over him? He replied: No, nor were the men of learning in poetry whom I have known accustomed to prefer any one to him. But, I said, there has been some difference of opinion in regard to Zuhair ibn Abū Sulmā and

1) Of course such a slightly different use of the term as that illustrated by the title 'Alqama *al-Faḥl* (on its origin, see Agh. XXI, 173) would suggest itself; cf. also the definition given in the *Lisān*: فُحول الشُعراء هم الذين غلبوا بالهجاء مَن هاجاهم مثل جرير والفرزدق واشباههما وكذلك كلّ من عارض شاعرا فغلب عليه.

2) More exactly: the *ibn labūn* is a camel entering upon his third year; the *bāzil* (plur. *buzul*) is eight or nine years old.

in a passage which is not found in our text of the work, though it might perhaps have stood there originally. I print in square brackets the portion which is wanting in the Landberg manuscript.

اخبرني محمد بن الحسن بن دريد قال حدثنا ابو حاتم قال سألت الاصمعي عن اعشى همدان فقال هو من الفحول وهو اسلامي كثير الشعر [ثم قال لي العجب من ابن داب حين يزعم ان اعشى همدان قال

مَن دَعا لى غُزَيِّلِى أَربَحَ اللهْ تِجارتُهْ

ثم قال سبحان الله أَمثل هذا يجوز على الاعشى أَن يجزم اسم الله عزّ وجلّ ويرفع تجارته وهو نصب ثم قال لي خلف الاحمر والله لقد طمع ابن دأب في الخلافة حين ظنّ ان هذا يقبل منه وان له من المحلّ مثل ان يجوز مثل هذا ثم قال ومع ذلك ايضا أَن قوله * من دعا لى غزيّلى * لا يجوز انما هو * من دعا لغزيلى * ومن دعا لبعير ضالّ]. "Ibn Duraid reports from Abū Ḥātim: I asked al-Aṣmaʿī about Aʿšā Hamdān, and he said: He is one of the *fuḥūl*, though of Islām, and the author of much poetry. [He (al-Aṣmaʿī) continued: One can only wonder at Ibn Da'b when he asserts that Aʿšā Hamdān was the author of this:

Man daʿā lī ghuzayyili Arbaḥ allāh tijāratuh[1]).

God forbid that this sort of thing should be allowed to pass as perpetrated by al-Aʿšā, that he should pronounce the word "*Allāh*" with the *sukūn*, and put "*tijāratuh*" in the nominative when it should be in the accusative! Thereupon Ḫalaf al-Aḥmar said to me: Verily, Ibn Da'b must have been aspiring to the caliphate when he imagined that this would be accepted from him, and that his place was so high that such an assertion as this could pass. Then he added: Moreover, even the first half-verse, *man daʿā lī ghuzayyili*, is not permissible; it can only be, *man daʿā lighuzayyili*, as one says, *man daʿā libaʿīrin ḍāllin*" [2])].

In the text which follows, the Landberg manuscript is faithfully reproduced, except in a very few cases where good reason for deviation is given in the notes at the foot of the page. The vowel-pointing is usually that of the ms. itself.

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1) That is: Whoever calls for me my little gazelle, may God make his trading profitable.

2) That is: Who summons (its owner) to a straying beast (which has been found); cf. *Lisān* XVIII, 285 (above), etc.

other words. His use of the designation *fursān* is another illustration of the fact that he is not concerned with the terminology of a thoroughgoing literary classification. He speaks of these Arab "knights" of old as we might speak of the knights of the middle ages, or of the Troubadours. They were invested with an atmosphere of nobility and chivalry, and men like al-Aṣmaʿī spoke of them with an enthusiasm which was only in part based on approval of their poetical achievements. "Those who made predatory excursions *on foot*" form another class, a less distinguished group than that of the "knights", numbering such men as Taʾabbaṭa Šarran and aš-Šanfarā; and here again the classification was not primarily concerned with rank in the art of poetry. Thus it appears, for instance, that the two classes, *faḥl* and *fursān*, are not mutually exclusive. Duraid ibn aṣ-Ṣimma is mentioned as belonging to both groups (دريد بن الصمّة من فحول الفرسان), and the same possibility is implied in other passages.

It is obvious, from all this, that al-Aṣmaʿī's *fuḥūlat aš-Šuʿarāʾ* could not serve as the basis for subsequent systematic essays on the rank of the poets. It was both too indefinite and too arbitrary, besides seeming to put too many poets in the very foremost rank. It was not of any great use to later writers to have this unwieldy classification into *faḥl* and no-*faḥl*, where the opinions even of those best qualified to judge differed so widely, and the line between the two classes was often impossible to draw (as al-Aṣmaʿī himself confesses over and over again). If there was to be any ranking at all, it must be something better than this. Of course every scholar who undertook a thoroughgoing criticism of the Arab poets would be influenced by these judgments, and would usually either quote or adopt them to some extent; in a few cases, however, the estimate was too obviously one-sided to find general approval, as when the two lesser Aʿšās, of Hamdān and Bāhila, are classed among the *fuḥūl*, while the great Aʿšā is left out. The importance of the compilation is simply that of the "table talk" of a noted scholar, on a subject in which he was rightly regarded as a high authority. We may all be grateful to Abū Ḥātim for having followed his master about with a note-book.

The text of the work, as we possess it in our unique manuscript, is in fairly good condition, though there are a few doubtful passages and one or two disturbing lacunae. So far as it is possible to judge from internal evidence, the gaps are not extensive. It may be, moreover, that what we have is a somewhat abridged form of the original compilation; though this can only be called a possibility, not really made probable by the evidence. In one passage preserved in the *Aghānī* (V, 158), Ibn Duraid cites from Abū Ḥātim, from al-Aṣmaʿī, an opinion which is given in the same words in our كتاب فحولة الشعراء, and then continues the citation

the beginning of these "memoirs" is characteristic and significant. Abū Ḥātim had asked his master to name the foremost *faḥl* of all the poets, and the answer had been, Nābigha Ḏubyānī. "But", says Abū Ḥātim, "when he saw that I was writing down what he said, he reflected for a moment, and then proceeded: No, the first of them all is Imrulqais", etc. In one place, in speaking of the "knights" of the pre-Muhammadan time, he says that Ḥufāf, 'Antara, and az-Zibriqān were the best poets of the *fursān*; but on another occasion he names Duraid and Ḥufāf as the best of the group. There are several other patent examples of inconsistency. An anecdote which he tells here of the poet Kuṯayyir really serves to illustrate the off-hand manner in which many of his own judgments were expressed. Some one asked of Kuṯayyir who was the greatest poet, and received the answer, al-Ḥuṭai'a. The questioner then waited for some time, until he thought it likely that the poet would have forgotten the incident, and then asked the same question again; this time receiving the answer, Imrulqais. For a considerable part of the material here collected by Abū Ḥātim, we cannot be confident that it gives us what al-Aṣma'ī himself would have written down as his final estimate, in a serious attempt to rank the Arab poets. We can hardly doubt, on the other hand, that al-Aṣma'ī has been faithfully reported by his pupil; the question of the substantial genuineness of the compilation can hardly arise.

The scientific value of the treatise, as a specimen of literary criticism, is small. It is quite plain that the great philologian had not made any careful study of the criteria according to which poets were to be excluded from, or admitted to, his *faḥl* class. It is also evident that he had no system of successive classes, in which he ranked those whom he would not reckon among the *fuḥūl*. In speaking of the poets who fell below the highest rank, he used a variety of complimentary terms, more or less at haphazard, and without showing any purpose of making even a rough classification. Goldziher, in his above-mentioned essay, seems to me to go too far when he says (Abhandl. I, 137): "Al-Aṣma'ī hat sogar einen neuen Terminus festgestellt, durch welchen er, gleichsam in schonender Weise, hochberühmte Dichter der Ǧâhilijja aus der Ordnung der eigentlichen Klassiker entfernt, ohne damit ihren Werth völlig herabzusetzen. Er nennt diese Dichter zweiter Ordnung: *karîm*, edel". Goldziher then cites the cases of Ḥātim (انما يُعَدّ بكَرَم ولم يُقَلْ انّه فحل) and 'Urwa (شاعر كريم وليس بفحل). But this, I think, reads into al-Aṣma'ī's words more than he intended. He had no thought of a definite *second class*, in which the term *karam* was used in the same way as *fuḥūla*. It was only by accident that he employed the adjective *karīm* in these cases; on another day, speaking of the same poets, he might have chosen

at some length the work before us, the فحولة الشعراء of al-Aṣma'ī, which he had been able to use while the manuscript was still in Landberg's possession. To his treatment of the subject the reader is accordingly referred. Again, Brockelmann in the *Nöldeke-Festschrift*, I, 109—125, has published a conspectus of one of the earliest and most important of the *fuḥūla* books, the طبقات الشعراء of Muḥammad ibn Sallām al-Jumaḥī († 231), making use of all the surviving fragments of the work which he was able to collect. This is a systematic treatise on the ranking of the poets, and therefore altogether different from the compilation of Abū Ḥātim, as will presently appear. Finally, we are promised a complete edition of this treatise of al-Jumaḥī in the near future, by Professor Hell of Munich, who has found a manuscript containing it in the Khedivial Library in Cairo; see his announcement in the ZDMG. 64, p. 659, note.

As has just been said, the remarks on the poets made by al-Aṣma'ī, and collected by Abū Ḥātim as-Sijistānī under the title *Kitāb Fuḥūlat aš-Šu'arā'*, do not constitute anything like a systematic compilation. What we have is simply a catena of scattered sayings, of very uneven value, made on many different occasions, and thrown together without any plan of arrangement. Some of the judgments were given in answer to questions, while others (and these constitute the great majority) were the merest *obiter dicta*. The opinion expressed is in many cases confined to this one point, the fitness of the poet to bear the title *faḥl*, that is, "thoroughbred male" (especially male camel), or "stallion", a truly Arabian way of picturing the embodiment of pure native blood, masculine force, and high spirit. The holder of this rank must have been, first of all, a poet of very noteworthy achievements; thus it is said of al-Ḥuwaidira, for example: "If he had produced five *qaṣīdas* like the one which we have, he would have been a *faḥl*". But he must also have been a true representative of the genuine Arab stock at its best, embodying the qualities which were most characteristic of the free and vigorous life of the native clans, battling for their precarious existence on the edge of the desert. As Goldziher remarks (loc. cit., p. 135): "Nicht die dichterische Kraft allein macht den Menschen dieser Benennung würdig; diese bezieht sich vielmehr auch auf die Eigenschaften des ritterlichen Charakters". It is easy to see why the poets of the Islamic time were not easily given the title which seemed to belong by especial right to the primitive period and the Bedawī nobility. Al-Aṣma'ī's estimates, both as to the *fuḥūla* quality and also on other matters concerning the old poets, while always interesting are frequently not convincing. Some are evidently the fruit of long deliberation; others are so carelessly made that we may suspect that al-Aṣma'ī himself would have modified or even retracted them a few days later, when he was in another mood. One of the incidents narrated near

Al-Aṣmaʿī's Fuḥūlat aš-Šuʿarā'.

By

Charles C. Torrey.

A brief treatise, purporting to contain al-Aṣmaʿī's detailed estimate of the pre-Mohammedan poets, has been known to exist in a single manuscript in Damascus. The attention of occidental scholars was first called to it by H. Lammens, in the *Journal Asiatique*, 1894, II, p. 155. The manuscript was copied for Count Landberg while he was in the East, and the copy, which is now in the library of Yale University, as number 49 of the Landberg Collection purchased in 1900, furnishes the text which is here published. The original manuscript, which is said to be about two hundred years old, contains also the *Dīwān* of Muḥammad ibn az-Zayyāt († 233), Ṯaʿlab's *Qawāʿid aš-Šiʿr*, and the *Šajarat ad-Durr* of ʿAbd al-Wāḥid ibn ʿAlī († 351).

The form of the كتاب فحولة الشعراء is that of a loose series of personal reminiscences. The narrator is al-Aṣmaʿī's favorite pupil Abū Ḥātim Sahl ibn Muḥammad as-Sijistānī, who reports from his master, verbatim, whatever he had heard him say — either of his own accord or in answer to questions, at various times — as to the relative merits of the ancient poets. Abū Ḥātim's narrative is transmitted, finally, through his own pupil, the renowned scholar Ibn Duraid, who is thus responsible for the redaction which lies before us.

The whole subject of *fuḥūla* literature has been treated so often that there is no need of general discussion here. Nöldeke, in his *Beiträge zur Kenntniss der Poesie der alten Araber*, 1 ff., translated and commented upon the Introduction to a work of this nature by Ibn Qutaiba; and much that is contained in that treatise may profitably be compared with this older compilation, unlike as the two are. Goldziher, in his *Abhandlungen zur arabischen Philologie* I, 122—174, has given us a characteristically thorough essay on "Alte und neue Poesie im Urteile der arabischen Kritiker", in which he discusses the principal criteria on which the earliest Muhammadan critics based their estimates. Moreover, in pp. 134—143 he deals with the term *faḥl* in particular, and characterizes